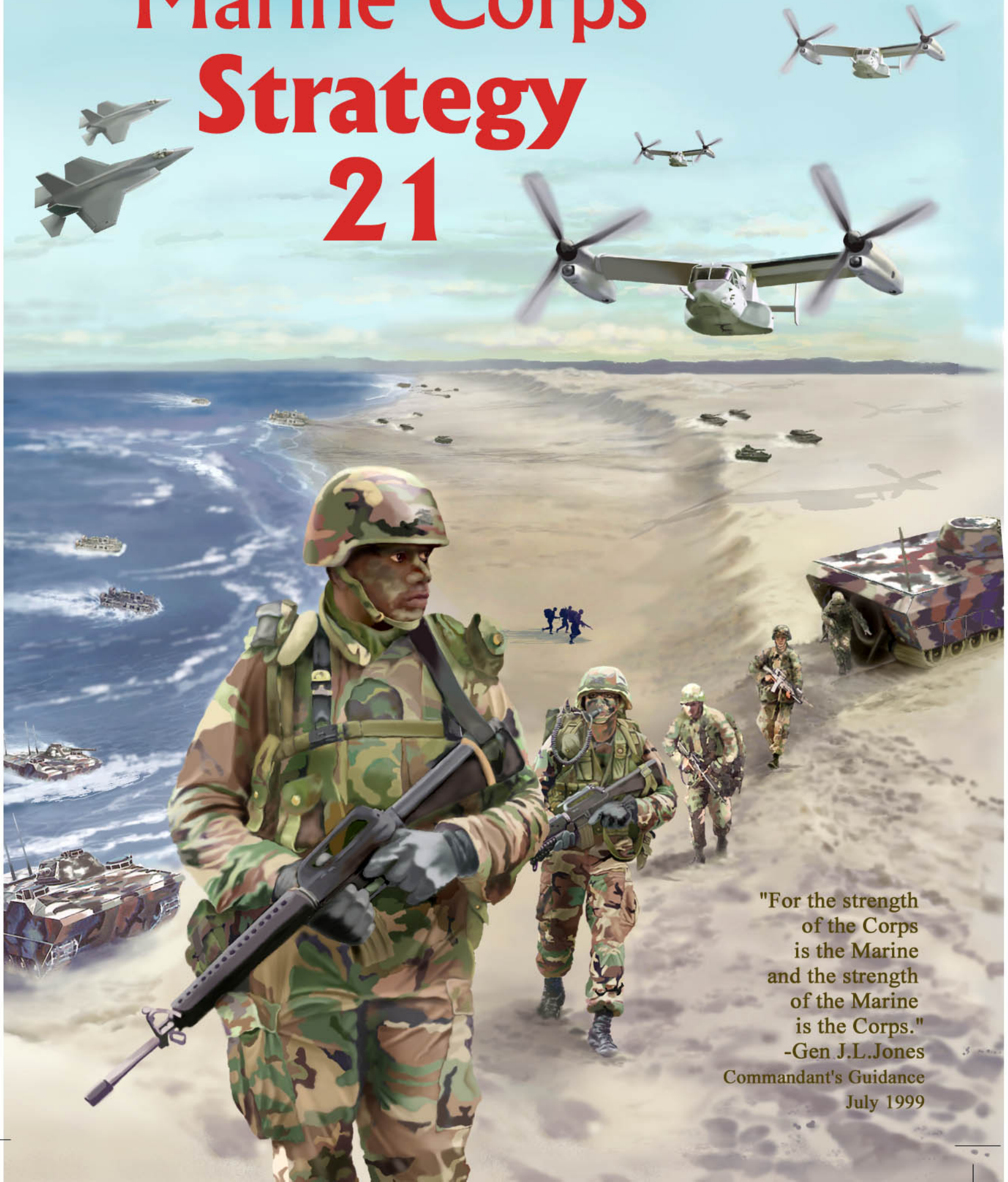


# Marine Corps Strategy 21



"For the strength  
of the Corps  
is the Marine  
and the strength  
of the Marine  
is the Corps."

-Gen J.L.Jones  
Commandant's Guidance  
July 1999

Department of the Navy  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

*Marine Corps Strategy 21* our axis of advance into the 21st century. It is by design a broad axis, that will adapt to changes in the domestic, international, and physical environments. This strategy enables the Marine Corps to build upon its foundations of heritage, innovation, and excellence to move beyond the objective and succeed on tomorrow's battlefields.

*Marine Corps Strategy 21* provides the vision, goals, and aims to support the development of future combat capabilities. It provides our strategic guidance to the active and reserve Marines, Sailors, and civilian personnel who will prepare and implement the supporting strategies and plans required to *make America's Marines, win our Nation's battles, and create quality citizens.*



**J. L. Jones**  
**General, U.S. Marine Corps**  
**Commandant of the Marine Corps**



***... from the air, land, and sea  
and in every clime and place!***



America's Marines stand ready to answer the call in the 21st century.

As the premier expeditionary "Total Force in Readiness," the Marine Corps will be tailored to answer the Nation's call, at home or abroad.

Opportunities and challenges in the world's littoral regions will increase America's reliance on the continuous forward presence and sustainable maritime power projection of Naval expeditionary forces. Those forces will influence vital regions, promote national interests, and fight and win the nation's battles.

The Marine Corps will enhance its strategic agility, operational reach, and tactical flexibility and enable joint, allied, and coalition operations and interagency actions. These capabilities will provide the Unified Combatant Commanders with scalable, interoperable, combined-arms Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) to shape the international environment, respond to the complex spectrum of crises and conflicts, and gain access or prosecute forcible entry operations.

Foundational to this vision, we will—

- ✚ Make America's Marines to win the Nation's battles and to become tomorrow's civic leaders.
- ✚ Optimize the Corps' operating forces, support and sustainment base, and unique capabilities.
- ✚ Sustain our enduring relationship with the Navy.
- ✚ Reinforce our strategic partnerships with our sister Services.
- ✚ Contribute to the development of Joint capabilities.
- ✚ Capitalize on innovation, experimentation, and technology.

As we have since 1775, the Marine Corps will stand ready to promote global stability and to defeat our Nation's foes.

# OUR VISION BUILDS ON OUR CORE VALUES, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND SIGNATURE CHARACTERISTICS



## Core Competencies

### Ready to Fight and Win

Every Marine is ready to rapidly deploy from within the theater or from CONUS and immediately engage in operations across the spectrum of conflict.

### Naval Character

In customs, traditions, and language, the Marine Corps' heritage and future are tied closely to the Navy. We are equally at home ashore or afloat, in combat, or in other expeditionary operations.

### Expeditionary Nature

Marines routinely adapt to diverse, austere, and chaotic environments on short notice and accomplish assigned missions independent of existing infrastructure and enable joint, allied, and coalition operations and interagency actions.

### Forcible Entry from the Sea

Together, the Navy and Marine Corps provide the Nation with its primary capability to project and sustain power ashore in the face of armed opposition. Amphibious operations are fundamental to our naval character.

### Combined-Arms Operations

Marines fight as air-ground task forces—integrated organizations that provide air combat, ground combat, and combat service support forces under a single commander. The MAGTF commander fights a single battle that unites and enhances the capabilities of his force.

### Task Organized

MAGTFs provide geographic combatant commanders with forces that are tailored to meet specific mission requirements from forward presence and peace-time engagement to a major theater war. Every MAGTF is a scalable force, possessing the ability to rapidly reconfigure based on a changing situation.

### Integrated Reserve Force

Ready, responsive Marine Reserve forces are a vital part of the Marine Corps and provide depth, flexibility, and sustainment and are integrated for mission accomplishment across the complex spectrum of crises and conflicts.



Honor

Courage

Commitment

## Signature Characteristics of Our Vision

The Nation's Premier Expeditionary "Total Force in Readiness"

Scalable to Meet Combatant Commanders' Requirements

Enable Joint, Allied, and Coalition Operations

Capable of a Multitude of Missions Across the Spectrum of Conflict

Accomplish Such Other Missions as the President of the United States or Secretary of Defense May Direct



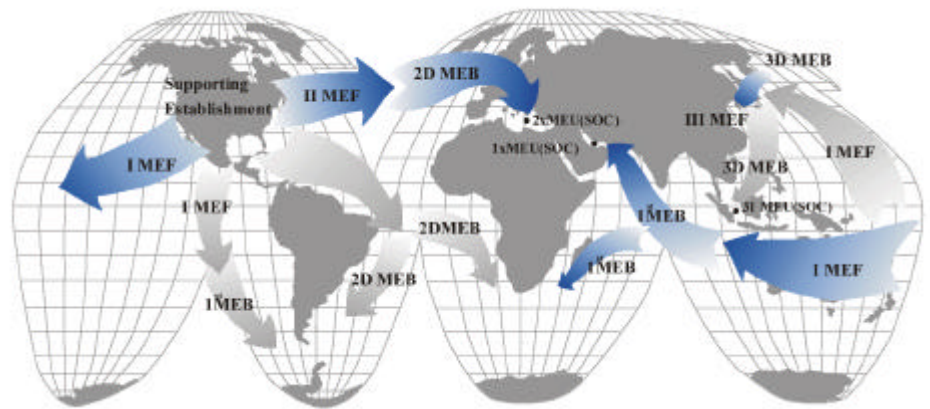


# THE PREMIER EXPEDITIONARY "TOTAL FORCE IN READINESS"

## SCALABLE MARINE FORCES: MEF TO MEB TO MEU(SOC)

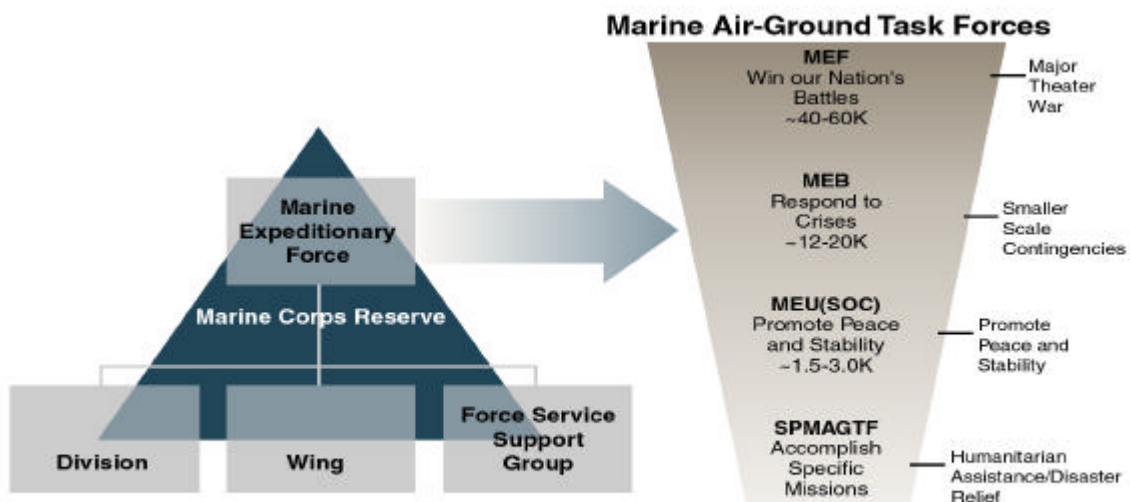
Throughout our history, Marines have responded to national and international brushfires and crises and, when necessary, war. The Marine Corps operates as Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), integrated, combined-arms forces that include air, ground, and combat service support units under a single commander. MAGTFs are organized, trained, and equipped from the operating forces assigned to Marine Forces, Pacific and Marine Forces, Atlantic. The Commanders of Marine Forces Pacific and Atlantic provide geographical combatant commanders with scalable MAGTFs that possess the unique ability to project mobile, reinforceable, sustainable combat power across the spectrum of conflict.

**Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs)** are task-organized to fight and win our Nation's battles



in a major theater war. **Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs)** are task-organized to respond to a full range of crises, from forcible entry to humanitarian assistance. They are our premier response force for smaller-scale contingencies that are so prevalent in today's security environment. **Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)s)** are task-organized to provide a forward deployed presence to pro-

mote peace and stability and are the tips on each MEF's spear. **Special Purpose MAGTFs (SPMAGTFs)** are task-organized to accomplish specific missions, operations, or regionally-focused exercises. **MAGTFs** represent a continuum of forces, tethered to CINC requirements. Whether coming from amphibious ships, marrying up with maritime pre-positioning ships, or arriving via strategic airlift, they provide scalable and potent response.



*Forward-deployed MEUs serve as advance echelons of MEBs, which in turn serve as advance echelons of MEFs.*

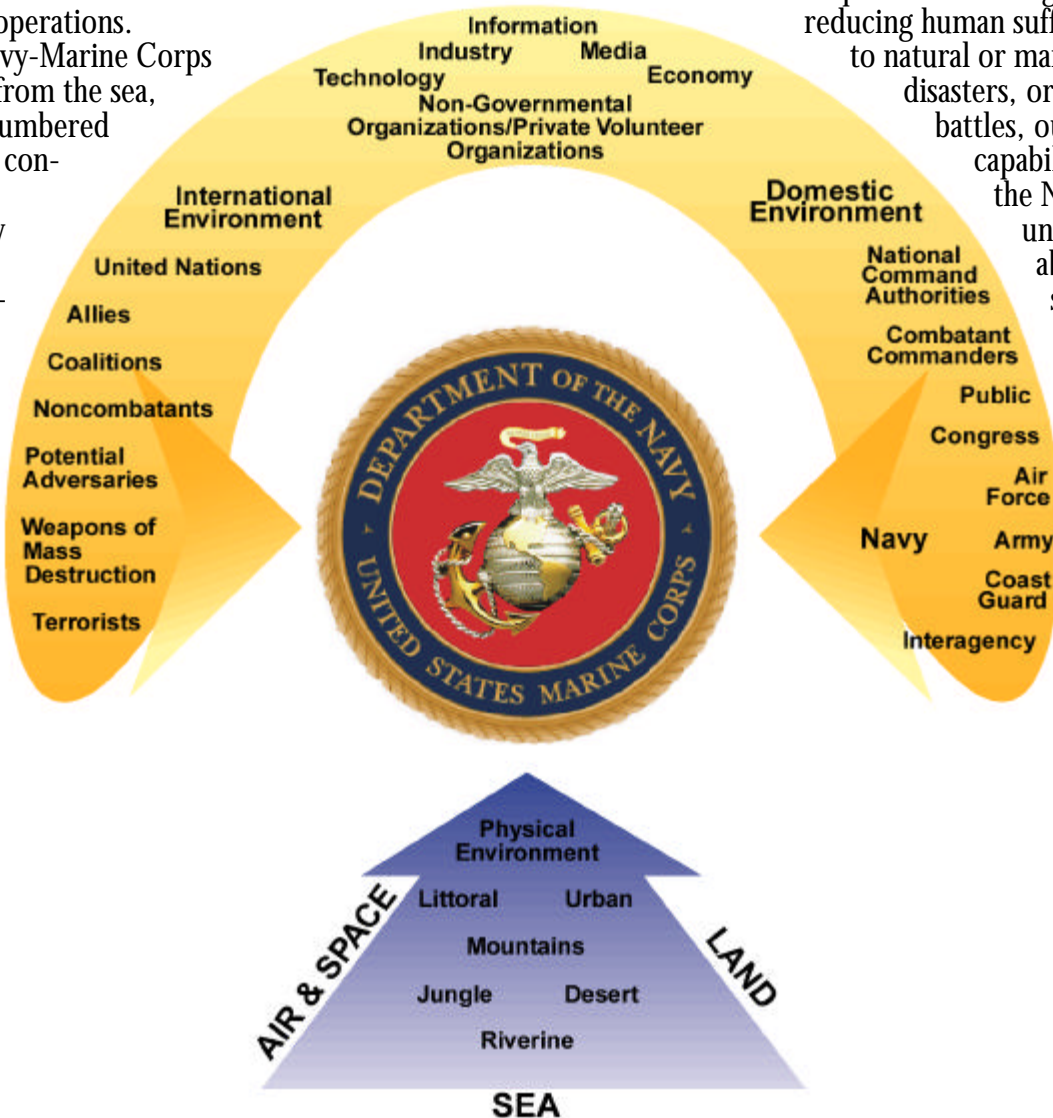
# STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

As the Nation's premier expeditionary total force in readiness, we are prepared to operate anywhere our national interests require. Our operating forces respond across the spectrum of conflict in the littorals and, in conjunction with the Army, in the execution of sustained land operations. Because the Navy-Marine Corps team operates from the sea, we are less encumbered by the political constraints often encountered by forward-deployed, land-based forces. The only invitation we require to move to a crisis area is

an order from the regional combatant commander. With no requirement for overflight rights or access through adjacent countries, amphibious and maritime prepositioning forces play an ever-increasing role in supporting

the attainment of our national objectives while protecting our national interests. As our operational reach increases, so does the depth and degree to which we can influence events ashore. Whether supporting stability through forward presence and engagement, reducing human suffering due to natural or manmade disasters, or winning battles, our unique capabilities offer the Nation an unparalleled ability to seize opportunities and respond to challenges.



*Opportunities and challenges lie ahead with the domestic, international, and physical environments shaping our future Corps. Marine Corps Strategy 21 is proactive and adaptable to take advantage of opportunities, overcome challenges, and prudently employ the men, women, and resources entrusted to us.*

## ADVERSARIES

As we begin the 21st century, regional powers, rogue elements, and non-state actors will pose security challenges embracing conventional military and non-traditional capabilities. Regional and internal instability will create situations where ethnic, economic, social, and environmental stresses

accentuate violence. Multiple belligerents and a blurring of the distinctions and national affiliations among terrorist groups, subnational factions, insurgent groups, and international criminals will complicate an environment where a direct attack is often the least likely course of action. As an

expeditionary, task-organized, combined-arms force with superb small-unit leaders, we are prepared to promote peace and stability or, if required, to jointly defeat our Nation's adversaries whether they possess conventional or unconventional capabilities.



**WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, TERRORIST ACTS, AND INFORMATION ATTACKS WILL EXACT AN INORDINATE PRICE FOR SMALL LAPSES IN THE PREPARATION OF THE BATTLESPACE.**

## THE MARINE CORPS OPERATES AS PART OF A LARGER JOINT FORCE

The Marine Corps is ideally suited for joint, allied, and coalition warfare. We are the only Service specifically tasked by Congress to operate combined arms in three dimensions—air, land, and sea. With our experience in coordinating the multidimensional elements of our air-ground task forces and our close relationship with the Navy, Marines instinctively understand the need for, and the logic and synergy behind, joint operations.

*Marine Corps Strategy 21* creates a Marine Corps capable of accomplishing its specified and implied tasks derived from the guidance in the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy, and other strategic-level documents. We provide combatant commanders with Marine forces that promote peace and stability through engagement, respond across the complex spectrum of crises, and, as part of a joint force, defeat our Nation's adversaries. Whenever these strategic documents are revised, the Marine Corps must assess strategy-driven force alternatives to ensure we continue to fulfill our role within the Armed Forces.

*Marine Corps Strategy 21* also supports *Joint Vision 2020*, which builds upon and extends the conceptual template established by *Joint Vision 2010* to guide the continuing evolution of the Armed Forces. Marines must analyze and influence this evolution. U.S. Joint Forces Command, through training and experimentation, plays a vital role in this endeavor; and we will support, participate, and provide input into their efforts. We must capitalize on innovation, experimentation, and technology and contribute to the development and enhancement of joint capabilities. *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* and *Operational Maneuver From the Sea* provide the basis for a Marine Corps organized, trained, and equipped to conduct maneuver warfare in a joint environment within the complex spectrum of 21st century conflict.



# MAKE AMERICA'S MARINES, FIGHT AND WIN OUR NATION'S BATTLES

## MARINE CORPS GOALS AND AIMS











The Marine Corps has three major *goals* to realize our vision. Associated with each of these goals are a number of *aims* that focus efforts towards achieving our goals. Our goals and aims are founded on our philosophy of maneuver warfare—they state desired “ends” and a direction without stating “ways” or “how” we intend to get there. The supporting documents to the *Marine Corps Strategy 21* address the “how.”

To achieve our vision, it is imperative that *all Marines* understand the roles their commands or organizations are to play and that *each Marine's* contribution is fundamental to achieving the Corps' goals and aims.

### Make America's Marines

#### **Our goal is to make America's Marines into the premier expeditionary “Total Force in Readiness.”**

Our *aims* are to—

-  Recruit, develop, organize, and sustain a quality Total Force with the proper mix of educated and trained active and reserve Marines and civilian personnel.
-  Make America's Marines who remain quality citizens imbued with the core values of *honor, courage, and commitment*.
-  Make every Marine a rifleman.
-  Strengthen trust, reward performance, accept mistakes and learn from them, enhance retention, and develop the full potential of our Marines and civilian work force.
-  Upgrade the quality of service and life for our Marines, their families, and our civilian employees.
-  Create a dynamic training and education system that prepares Marines and Marine Forces to excel in the chaotic environment of the littorals.
-  Cultivate the best possible environment for training and ensure long-term access to U.S. training areas that provide capability for air, land, and sea maneuver and seek to influence access to these types of training areas wherever Marine forces are stationed or deployed.
-  Strengthen and exercise integrated active and reserve training plans to enhance Total Force mobilization readiness.
-  Create a distributed planning, training, and rehearsal capability for the MAGTF at the tactical and operational levels of war to include enhanced amphibious capability.
-  Expand our participation in science and technology developments to enhance the capabilities of the Total Force.

*“To prevail on the complex battlefields of the future, Sailors and Marines will require judgment, strength of character, and the ability to make sound, timely, independent decisions.”*  
—Department of the Navy  
Posture Statement 2000



**Our goal is to optimize the Corps' operating forces, support and sustainment base, and unique capabilities to respond to the complex spectrum of crises and conflicts.** Our *aims* are to—

- Provide combatant commanders with scalable, interoperable, expeditionary, combined-arms MAGTFS—ready to fight and win America's battles—and shape the international security environment across the complex spectrum of crises and conflict.
- Enhance strategic response and operational reach to support and enable joint, allied, and coalition operations and interagency actions.
- Increase means of integrating and improving interoperability with allied and coalition amphibious, land, and air forces.
- Enhance the MAGTF's interoperability within a joint multinational force through an efficient command and control system combined with a seamless, organic, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability linked to national and theater agencies.
- Expand capabilities to observe, visualize, and shape the operational area and to attack enemy operational and tactical centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities.
- Enhance responsive, integrated, and balanced expeditionary fires leveraging improvements to organic surveillance, target acquisition, aviation, and indirect fires; Navy fire support; and leverage the capability of joint fires.
- Enhance capabilities to operate in urban and austere environments across the spectrum of conflict while simultaneously further reducing our dependence on existing infrastructure.
- Enhance and expand offensive and defensive information operations capabilities.
- Provide DoD a fully integrated and coordinated Non-Lethal Weapons Program based upon flexible and selective engagement capabilities.



## Optimize

*“[A] Naval expeditionary force, that while deployed unobtrusively in international waters, is instantly ready to help any friend, defeat any foe, and convince any potential enemy of the wisdom of keeping the peace.”*  
—Operational Maneuver From the Sea

## Capitalize

**Our goal is to capitalize on innovation, experimentation, and technology to prepare Marine Forces to excel in the 21st century.** Our *aims* are to—

- ✚ Evolve maneuver warfare tactics, techniques, and procedures to fully exploit the joint operational concepts articulated in *Joint Vision 2020*.
- ✚ Evolve our warfighting concepts to enhance our ability to participate as partners in joint and allied concept development and experimentation.
- ✚ Incorporate 21st century operational-level amphibious, maritime prepositioning, aviation, and land mobility and maneuver capabilities into the operating forces.
- ✚ Ensure access to the littorals through evolving amphibious (to include mine and obstacle countermeasures and naval surface fires), maritime prepositioning, fast troop lift, and naval aviation capabilities.
- ✚ Provide expeditionary-based/sited assets and forces capable of reinforcing and sustaining naval expeditionary forces in all phases of their operations.
- ✚ Network operational communications, information, and intelligence systems with joint and allied forces and interagency organization and provide a global access capability to domestic and international information resources.
- ✚ Enhance experimentation to include ways to accomplish acquisition, logistic, and support tasks through technological innovations, outsourcing, and other techniques.
- ✚ Provide rapid and precise delivery of tailored logistics to the operating forces in any operational environment.
- ✚ Right-size the supporting establishment by enhancements to training and education, inventory management, engineering, maintenance, and infrastructure.
- ✚ Assess strategy-driven force structure alternatives.

*“Given, the global nature of our interests and obligations, the United States must maintain its overseas presence forces and the ability to rapidly project power worldwide in order to achieve full spectrum dominance.”*

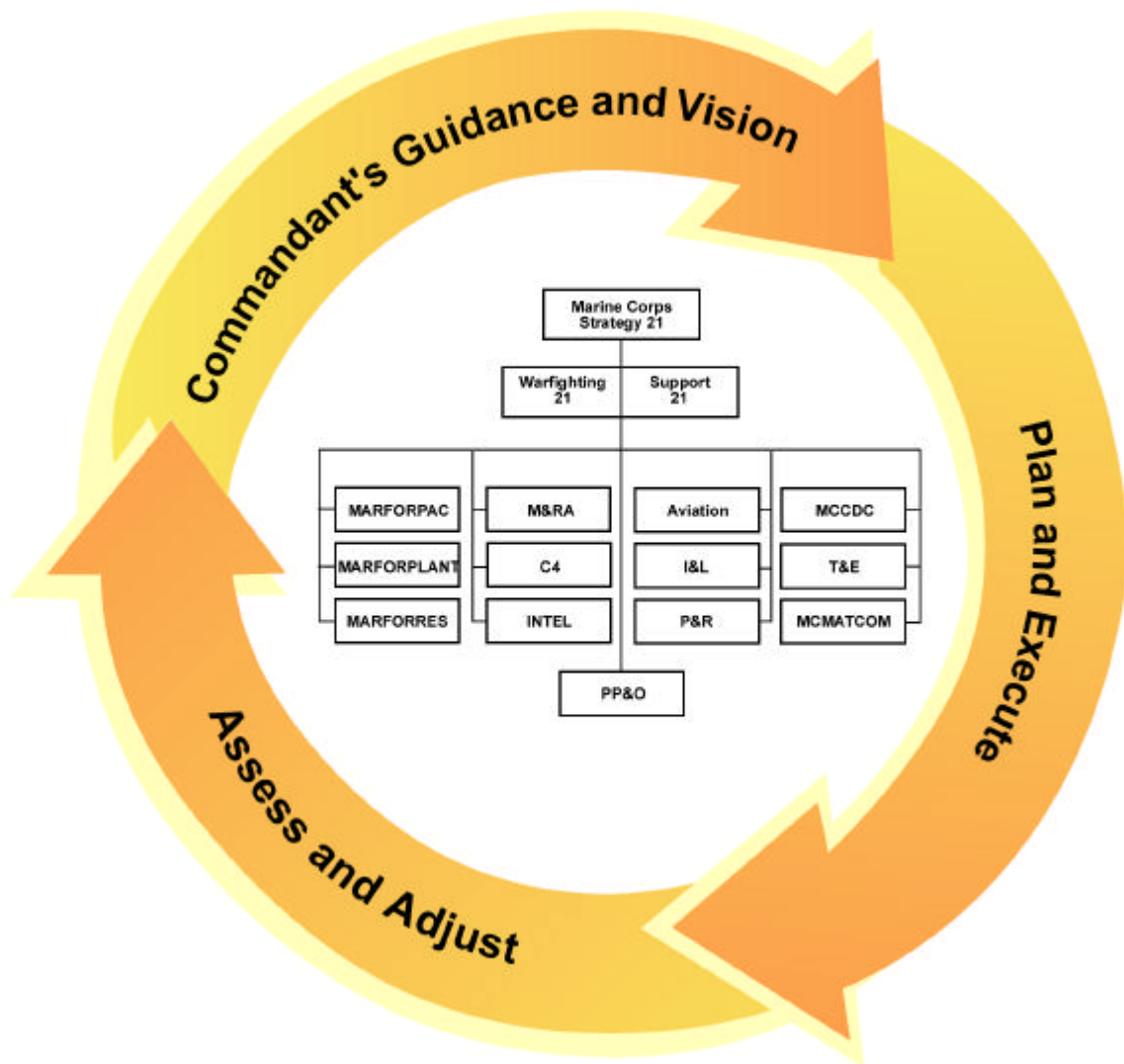
—Joint Vision 2020





# COMMANDANT'S GUIDANCE AND VISION

## FAMILY OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS



*Marine Corps Strategy 21* is the capstone strategy of the Marine Corps and describes our axis of advance into the 21st century.

*Warfighting 21* and *Support 21* are the keystone documents that facilitate the evolution of our operating forces and supporting establishment, respectively. *Warfighting 21* focuses on expeditionary maneuver warfare and the required operational capabilities to promote peace and stability and, when necessary, to fight and win our future battles. *Support 21* focuses on those actions and capabilities needed to make Marines and provide the training, equipment, and sustainment to MAGTFs. Together, *Marine Corps Strategy 21* and the two keystone documents provide the framework for our operating forces and organizations of the Marine Corps to develop supporting strategies or plans to accomplish our goals and aims and to achieve our vision.



As we have since 1775, the **Marine Corps** will remain  
**essential** to America's efforts to promote global **stability**  
and will stand ready to defeat our Nation's adversaries.